

FEAR

Gandhi

The enemy is fear. We think it is hate;
but, it is fear.

John Lennon

There are two basic motivating forces:
fear and love.

Adrienne Rich

We know now we have always been in
danger
down in our separateness
and now up here together. But til now
we had not touched our strength

What does love mean
what does it mean "to survive"

Audre Lorde

When I dare to be powerful, to use my
strength in the service of my vision,
then it becomes less and less
important whether I am afraid.

Sugar

Walk without a stick into the darkest
woods.

FEAR

15 interviews with movement leaders

What are you afraid of?

Not being seen for who I am.
Being put in a box.
Proving the naysayers right.
Losing control of my own narrative.
Failing in public.
That who I am doesn't fit with leadership.
Sounding stupid.
Not having enough money.
Being evaluated exclusively by my words.
Being a let down.
What it would be like for me if I left.
That I don't belong here.
Addressing a powerful adversary.
Saying the wrong thing.
That I'll ruin something good.
That my story will be told on their terms.
Being the only person like me in a room.
That they won't think I'm ready.
That I'm not ready.

How has being afraid held you back?

I was never afraid of having power before, but I noticed that as my fears grew, they were chipping away at my confidence.

I went from being a bold risk-taker to being gun shy.

I know I missed out on opportunities, for me, and my organization.

As they began to position me as a "scrappy kid," it felt like all of the other qualities I was bringing to my organization were disappearing.

There are spaces where my fear is triggered, and because of that I sometimes avoid those spaces. But I am deeply needed there, I know that.

I became susceptible to others' paranoia and fear. When they believed the sky was falling, I believe it too - facts didn't matter, only fears.

I physically feel silence.
I feel choked up.
I don't feel measured.
My mind is racing.
I can't articulate what I think.
My emotions are controlling me.
I feel alone.
I feel powerless.
My chest feels as though it's wrapped with elastic bands.
My voice shakes.
I shrink.
My heart races.
I feel hyper-aware.
Like everyone can see me crumbling.
I feel exposed.
I feel invisible.

What does fear feel like?

If you don't take a risk, you're not going to go anywhere. We have all gotten too safe.

The best mentor I ever had nurtured us to take risks. She modeled fearlessness, and in doing so, she made us all less afraid.

How did I overcome my fears? I did what I was afraid of again and again and again and noted that life biased me in the direction of survival.

Leading an organization is lonely. No one tells you that. Without a strong network of peers, I would've second guessed all of my best instincts.